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MFC BRIEFING

BACKGROUND PIECE ON NORTH AFRICA

- I. **Tunisian-French agreement 17 June providing for evacuation of some 9,000 French forces from a dozen bases has reduced tensions markedly. Some 13,000 French troops remain at Bizerte base, status of which is to be negotiated later.**
 - A. **Diplomatic relations normalized 22 June by return of French Ambassador to Tunis and opening negotiations on complex of problems arising from 3 February French bombing of market Sidi Youssef.**
 - B. **Orderly French evacuation commenced 23 June; scheduled for completion in four months but may be concluded sooner. Tunisians fear French vandalism at permanent installations, which would sour Bizerte negotiations.**
 - C. **Despite current optimism over 17 June accord, Tunisians will ultimately demand evacuation of all but essential technicians from Bizerte. Bourguiba has warned that "if necessary, we will resume the battle."**
- II. **Moroccan-French negotiations for partial French evacuation underway. Morocco demands French declaration it is evacuating troops. After this declaration Morocco will permit some French troops to remain and will consent to French retention of military training bases.**
 - A. **French apparently are asking for 18 bases—including five jointly operated with US—but probably could reduce to six or eight.**

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B. Moroccan King has indicated to French Ambassador his pique that Tunisian accord was concluded first; he claimed Morocco had been more reasonable than Tunisia in seeking French evacuation with "only the result of being less successful."

III. Meanwhile, both Tunisia and Morocco will continue to support Algerian independence—including granting Algerian rebels bases and facilitating rebels' acquisition of arms—thereby precluding possibility of early establishment of good relations with France.

A. At tripartite meeting in Tunis 17-21 June, Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian leaders reaffirmed Algeria's right to "sovereignty and independence," provided for establishment of a "provisional consultative assembly" as step toward eventual Maghrebian (North African) federation, but again avoided issue of an Algerian government-in-exile.

IV. In Algeria neither recent takeover by military and extremist settlers nor subsequent return to power in Paris of De Gaulle has lessened determination of Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) to continue guerrilla war until France recognizes Algeria's right to independence. FLN has categorically rejected integration of Algeria with France; might soft pedal independence if offered self-determination.

A. But FLN is concerned about possible adverse effects on its domestic and international positions of De Gaulle's promise of political equality for Algerian Moslems.

1. FLN is attempting step up terrorist and guerrilla operations to show presence and strength of FLN and keep Moslem matters in line.

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- B. Clashes with French in eastern border area down over few months ago--as result concentration French power there--but continue in interior.
- C. Apparent French success in cutting flow arms and men across Tunisian-Algerian frontier likely to lead to increased rebel use Moroccan channels. If serious materiel shortages develop, FLN may attempt--with Cairo's help--air lifting essential supplies.

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